THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) The handling and road transportation charges are not the same all over the country and may vary from depot to depot. However, transporation charges per tonne per kilometre by rail for wheat allover the country are the same, except in a few notified sections where freight rates are charged by the Railways on the basis of inflated distance. The freight rates are on telescopic basis. In other words frieght per tonne per kilometre decreases according to increasing distance-slabs.

(b) The handling of foodgrain bags in the depots/godowns by the FCI is much costlier in comparison to the handling of these operations through the contractors for the reason that regular departmental workers are eligible for wages and other benefits irrespective of the fact whether the work is available or not. In case of contract labour, payment is made with reference to the quantum of bags handled on piece rate basis.

(c) & (d) The FCI is appointing handling and transport contractors through-out the country in the depots other than the depots where departmental workers are doing handling work; but even in the departmentally operated depots, road-transportation work is being undertaken by the transport contractors appointed through open tender enquiry.

Paddy loss during storage in Punjab and Haryana

3358. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of paddy lost during storage in Punjab and Haryana during 1998 and 1999;

(b) whether these losses have been at par with the losses reported in Assam, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh during the above period; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) Food Corporation of India (FCI) has reported storage loss of paddy during 1998-99 and 1999-2000 in Punjab and Haryana as under:

Quantity in M.T.

Region	1998-99		1999-2000	
	Loss Qty.	%age	Loss	%age
Punjab	66216	4.25	49959	1.87
Haryana	2953	7.45	730	1.98

The FCI did not make any purchase of paddy in Assam, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh during 1998-99 and 1999-2000.

These figures do not include the loses of paddy procured by State Agencies on Central Pool account.

(c) Does not arise.

Distribution of foodgrains for BPL

3359. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the State Governments have failed to distribute foodgrains to the people living Below the Poverty Line which are supplied to them at highly subsidised prices;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether foodgrains allotted to the State Governments for distribution to the people living Below Poverty Line have been freely sold in the open markets; and

(d) if so, whether Government propose to investigate the matter and take further appropriate action in the matter and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) State Governments/UT Administrations have lifted 19.51 lakh tonnes against the allocation of 39.81 lakh tonnes *i.e.* about 49% of foodgrains allocated for distribution to BPL including Antyodaya families during April, 2001 to June, 2001.

(c) and (d) Public Distribution System is operated under the joint responsibility of Central and State Governments/UT Administrations. The responsibility of distribution of allotted foodgrains to the consumers through